

RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 26th April, 2001/6 Vaisakha, 1923 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

विध्वंसक पनडुब्बियों का निर्माण

*581. श्री पी० के० माहेश्वरी: क्या रक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या भारतीय नौसेना ने अपनी क्षमता बढ़ाने के लिए कुछ विध्वंसक पनडुब्बियों के निर्माण के संबंध में कोई परियोजना तैयार की है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) इस परियोजना को पूरा करने के लिए क्या लक्ष्य निर्धारित किया गया है?

रक्षा मंत्री (श्री जसवंत सिंह): (क) यह स्पष्ट नहीं है कि "विध्वंसक" पनडुब्बियों से क्या तात्पर्य है।

(ख) और (ग) तथापि, भारतीय नौसेना की आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करने के लिए सरकार द्वारा एक दीर्घकालिक संदर्शी योजना अनुमोदित की गई है जिसमें पनडुब्बी डिजाइन, पनडुब्बियों व उनकी मूल प्रणालियों के विकास तथा निर्माण में स्वदेशी क्षमता अर्जित करने के साथ-साथ पनडुब्बियों के देश में ही निर्माण की परिकल्पना की गई है। यह योजना दो चरणों में कार्यान्वित की जानी है। योजनानुसार, इसका प्रथम चरण वर्ष 2012 में तथा द्वितीय चरण वर्ष 2030 में पूरा किया जाना है।

Manufacture of Destructive Submarines

†*581. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Navy has prepared any project to manufacture some destructive submarines to increase its capability;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the target fixed for completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) It is not clear what is meant by "destructive" submarines.

(b) and (c) However, a long term perspective plan envisaging acquisition of indigenous capability in submarine design, development and construction of submarines and their core systems, also indigenous construction of submarines to meet the requirements of the Indian Navy, has been approved by the Government. The plan is to be implemented in two phases. The first phase is scheduled for completion in 2012 and the second phase in 2030.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, before the hon. Member puts his supplementary, I would like to point out to him that all weapon systems meant for the armed forces are inherently destructive. If the hon. Member has the knowledge of some protective submarines, that will benefit us.

SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the word "destructive" has been used in common parlance. The project was made as an advanced technological vessels project, which is already there in the Standing Committee Report of the 12th Lok Sabha. The Navy is a part and parcel of the defence mechanism. Thousands of fishermen are dependent on the sea for their livelihood. Certainly, submarines are the vessels which protect them and the shores. Sir, my question is, the project itself has been pending for quite some time and the deadline was being extended time and again. May I

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

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request the hon. Minister of Defence, through you, to tell us whether these deadlines will be adhered to or there will be a further neglect and delay in this project.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, I will not go into the question of fishermen and the role that submarines of the Indian Navy have to play in that regard. That is the Coast Guards' function. As regards what I have already shared before the House and what the hon. Member has referred to about the Committee Reports etc., it is not something which is relevant to this question, but the Government has already approved the plan for the indigenous production of submarines. The first phase is scheduled for completion in 2012 and the second phase in 2030. The imputation by the hon. Member about the delay is not accepted. There is no delay. The plan is as per schedule and it will be implemented as per schedule.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri J. Chitharanjan.

SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Sir, may I put my second supplementary? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already put your two supplementaries.

SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: No; Sir, I had put only one supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was very long supplementary. All right, you can put your second supplementary now.

SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Sir, just for information, I want to know whether we are taking any help from any of the advanced countries to build up our programme of indigenisation in the case of this project.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, there is no help from any of the Gulf countries.

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Sir, in his reply, the hon. Minister has stated that a perspective plan has been approved and implemented. But the Minister has not stated as to when the Plan was accepted and when it will be implemented. That he has not said.

Therefore, that will have to be explained. Sir, the second part of my question is, we have already built certain installed capacity of submarines as well as warships. There is an impression that installed capacity is idling, and is not being used for the last several years. My question is: Will that matter be looked into and sorted out?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, the Plan has been approved by the Government. I have already addressed that issue. So far as the question of using the installed capacity is concerned, though the hon. Member has not referred to it, I recognise the validity of the question. Perhaps, the hon. Member is referring to the Mazgaon Docks Ltd. Yes, Sir; the Government is aware of the idle capacity at the Mazgaon Docks Ltd. For this Government, it was an inherited situation. We have addressed ourselves to it. And I can assure the hon. Member that the Mazgaon Docks are indeed the Docks that will be dealing with the indigenous submarine construction of the country.

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Sir, the hon. Minister has stated in his reply that a long-term perspective plan, envisaging indigenous construction of submarines to meet the requirements of the Indian Navy, has been approved by the Government. I want to know through you, Sir, from the hon. Minister the extent to which Indian submarines would be superior to that of Russian, which recently sank in the ocean and to that of the Ghazi of USA, which was destroyed during Indo-Pak War in 1965. The second part of my question is, whether there is any scheme to manufacture anti-torpedo and anti-magnet submarine.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, there are two aspects of the question. So far as the second part of the question is concerned, I would like to point out that it goes into the details of the technical capabilities of the weapon system under indigenous manufacture. I will seek your permission not to answer that. So far as the first part is concerned, as to whether the indigenous submarine will be superior to certain other submarines that met with accidents, etc., I can assure the hon. Members and the House that the submarines will be state-of-the-art submarines.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Sir, it is a very sensitive question which relates to national security. Now, whether to produce the equipment locally, or, to buy from outside, is for the Government to decide. Sir, I want to put a very specific question to the hon. Minister. I would like to know what steps are being taken to ensure that there are no middlemen in Defence deals. This is part (a) of my question. Part (b) of my question is this. I want to know whether the equipment are developed here or being bought from outside. Sir, as a result of this, the supplies of spares and things like that are being continuously affected. The things that have come up, that have surfaced through Tehelka.com—I do not want to go into that controversy—show that everything is not all right. The Navy has said somewhere—I read in the newspapers—that middleman cannot be avoided. Sir, I want to know what is the view of the Government on this.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the question does not strictly arise from the main question of indigenous manufacture of submarines. I am in your hands, however. I do not wish needlessly to raise the passions of the hon. Members in the House. The officially stated policy of the Government is clear; it is absolutely explicit. From the mid-80's onwards, when the then Government announced the policy of there being no middlemen in any defence deals, that is the policy that is being pursued, without any alteration at all.

So far as the question of ensuring the requisite quantities of spares and other aspects of any complex weapons system is concerned, we are here dealing with the indigenous manufacture of submarines in the country. The overall aspect of taking care of spares is always one of the factors that the Government has in mind.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Sir, as he rightly said, ever since the HDW submarine, the facilities in the Mazagon Docks have been badly neglected. They are just lying idle. Not only the facilities, but also nearly 400 to 500 trained technicians who are there, have been idle for the last ten years. I hope all the technicians are going to find place in your programmes, in your scheme of things, that you do in future.

In view of the heavy Chinese presence in the Bay of Bengal, is there any plan or proposal to take submarines on lease till our indigenous capacity is built up?

Lastly, Sir, in your discussions with President George Bush, was there any talk of lifting of the embargo that is affecting the supply of a lot of spare parts to the Indian navy?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, of the hon. Member's question, there are three components—the Mazagon Docks, the technicians and the talks with President Bush. I do not know how the talks with President Bush are connected with indigenous spares. I will deal with it. Don't worry. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: It is a very important thing, as far as our armed forces are concerned. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I just repeated the three aspects of the question that the hon. Member has raised.

First, about the Mazagon Docks, I have already addressed myself to this in reply to a query that an hon. Member raised earlier. The Government is entirely mindful of the lack of orders for the Mazagon Docks for a period of a decade plus, as the hon. Member himself has admitted it. I will not go into the definition of the decade. But nevertheless, this was an aspect that worried the Government, and we have addressed ourselves to that. I have already informed the House that, among other aspects of development, indigenous manufacture of submarines is going to be entrusted to the Mazagon Docks Ltd.

The second thing is relating to the excess and unutilised capacity of the technical personnel at the MDL. Yes, Sir, the Government is mindful. As the project progresses, I can assure the hon. Member, all these technical hands will be fully utilised.

Thirdly, regarding the United States of America and the talks that I had recently with President Bush, I did not directly raise with President Bush any question about the sanctions. However, in my call to the Defence Secretary Raffell at the Pentagon, and in the detailed talks with the Secretary of State, Gen. Colin Powell, the Secretary of State himself particularly invited my comments on the efficacy,

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advisability and other aspects of the US sanctions regime against India. And, I, for the first time, then, informed him that we found it counter-productive and not, of course, in India's national interest, but certainly not, to our reckoning, in the US national interest.

There is just one other aspect that I want to add. The sanctions regime imposed by the United States of America, post-May 1998 tests, had a provision, "There shall be no military to military contact between the United States of America and India." I visited the Pentagon on the invitation of the Defence Secretary of the United States of America. I went there, having the distinction and honour of being the Defence Minister of India. It was clearly established that if you have a military to military contact—because the Defence Minister to Defence Secretary contact can be nothing else but military to military contact—then that provision of the US sanctions regime against India stands answered by the actions of the US Government themselves.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Sir, I have two questions arising from the answer of the hon. Minister. My first question arises from the answer given to the second supplementary to the main question. If I have heard him correctly, the hon. Minister said that no help is being taken from the Gulf countries. My question is not on the help from the Gulf countries. I would like to know whether from any other country you have any agreement regarding this specific matter.

Now, I come to my second question. You have again said that it is a general policy of having no middlemen. I want to specifically ask you whether, on this particular matter, there is or there is no middlemen. If there is none, I want an assurance from you.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: So far as the first question relating to assistance from Gulf countries is concerned, I must have faltered in hearing the question. I thought the hon. Member wanted to know whether we were taking any help from any Gulf country. That is why I responded like that.

Now that the hon. Member wishes to know whether we are taking any technical or other variety of assistance from any other country, my answer is: "Yes, we are." We are in technical collaboration in

this project and in certain aspects of this project, which is not in the national interest for me to share publicly. But, that technical collaboration is part of the weapons development system, that is now a global aspect. In fact, no country develops a total weapons system entirely on its own.

So far as the indigenous submarine manufacture programme is concerned, I have no difficulty in assuring the hon. Member that so far as the Ministry of Defence is concerned, there are no middleman in this project.

श्री एस० एस० अहलुवालिया: सभापति महोदय, समुद्री सीमाओं की रक्षा के लिए हमें समुद्री बेड़े और पनडुब्बियों की जरूरत पड़ती है। पर उसके साथ-साथ हमारे पास में यूनाइटेड नेशंस कन्वेंशन के माध्यम से एक लाख पचास हजार स्क्वायर नोटिकल माइल समुद्र में जगह है जहां पर हम भूख कर सकते हैं और इकॉनॉमिक जोन भी बना सकते हैं। उनकी सुरक्षा के लिए कोस्ट गार्ड हैं और यहां की पनडुब्बियां और बेड़े भी सुरक्षा करते हैं। पर महोदय, नई तकनीकी के कारण समुद्र की तलहटी पर जो पौलि मेटेलिक नोड्यूल्स हैं उसकी चोरी से जो मायनिंग हो रही है, क्या यह पनडुब्बियां इसके साथ-साथ इसमें गवेस्ना करने की और इस तरह की पौलि मेटेलिक नोड्यूल्स की मायनिंग को रोकने की या उसको डिटेक्ट करने का भी आपका कोई प्रावधान रहेगा, क्योंकि अभी हमारे पास ओसीनोग्राफी के पास जो समुद्र हैं उनकी गवेस्ना जर्मनी से कराई जाती है। समुद्र कन्या और गवेस्ना करके दो जहाज हैं जो सारा डाटा इकट्ठा करते हैं और उनकी डि-कोडिंग बाहर होती है। तो क्यों न हम अपनी नई पनडुब्बियों को मल्टी परपज पनडुब्बियां बनाए जिसमें हमारे साईसदान और सुरक्षा व्यवस्था दोनों हों और जो डाटा हम वहां से कलेक्ट कर सकें, उसकी डि-कोडिंग हम डिफेंस के कंट्रोल में ही यहीं हिन्दुस्तान में कर सकें ताकि दुश्मन के हाथ में न जाएं, तो क्या ऐसा प्रावधान रखेंगे?

श्री जसवंत सिंह: सभापति जी, मूल प्रश्न अपने आप में पनडुब्बियों से सम्बन्धित है। माननीय सदस्य ने जो प्रश्न पूछा है वह भारत के एक्सक्लूसिव इकॉनॉमिक जोन और उसमें समुद्र की तलहटी पर जो नोड्यूल्स पाए जाते हैं उनसे सम्बन्धित है। पहला पहलू यह है कि जो रक्षा मंत्रालय द्वारा पनडुब्बियों का यहां डवलपमेंट किया जा रहा है, क्या उनका प्रयोग इस काम में लिया जा सकता है? नहीं लिया जा सकता क्योंकि इनकी प्राथमिक आवश्यकता सुरक्षा से जुड़ी हुई है। दूसरा पहलू यह है कि क्या सरकार इस ओर सजग है कि एक्सक्लूसिव इकॉनॉमिक जोन में जो नोड्यूल्स हैं, उनकी समुचित तौर पर और सही तरीके से माइनिंग होनी चाहिए। जी हां,

यह प्रश्न अपने आप में ओसियन डेवलपमेंट से संबंधित है और अच्छा होगा माननीय सदस्य का जो प्रश्न है उसे मैं ओसियन डेवलपमेंट मंत्रालय को भेजूं। ...(व्यवधान)....

श्री एस० एस० अहलुवालिया: मैंने कहा है कि आप मल्टीपरपज पनडुब्बियां बनाइये क्योंकि ये सारी दुनिया में बनाई जा रही हैं।

श्री जसवंत सिंह: एक विशेष रूप से, एक विशेष आवश्यकता के लिए यह प्रोजेक्ट है और उस आवश्यकता पर ध्यान केन्द्रित करके अगर इस प्रोजेक्ट को पूरा किया जाए तो सही होगा, ऐसा रक्षा मंत्रालय का विचार है।

SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, any delay in the ATV project is not in the interest of the country. The target dates fixed for the completion of this project are being shifted, from time to time. Now, the hon. Minister says that the target date fixed for the completion of this project is 2012 in the first phase; and 2030 in the second phase. By that time the concerned DRDO officers, naval officers, the Minister of Defence responsible and other officers accountable will not be there. Keeping all these points in mind, what is the plan of action of the Government?

The second part of my question is: as per the media report, there was a proposal from the then Naval Chief in 1998 for the technical-cum-performance audit of this important project. But this proposal was turned down in 1998 by the then Defence Minister. Is it correct or not? If 'yes' what was the reason for turning down the proposal made by the then Naval Chief in 1998?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Member has confused between the indigenous submarine project and what he terms as the ATV project. These are two very different aspects, two different projects. I would submit for your consideration—the proposal referred to by the hon. Member is the ATV project—that I will not be in a position to speak publicly on this project, at all. Certain aspects(interruptions)...

श्री सुरेश पचौरी: सर, मैं आपकी परमिशन से यह बताना चाहता हूँ। माननीय मंत्री जी यह कह रहे हैं कि नेशनल इंटरैस्ट में यह नहीं बता सकते। ... (व्यवधान)...

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: May I finish?

श्री सुरेश पचौरी: ऐसा नहीं है। आलरेडी कमेटी की रिपोर्ट में यह प्रकाशित हुआ है। एक माननीय सदस्य को यह बताया गया है कि स्टैंडिंग कमेटी में इसका आब्जर्वेशन नहीं है। मैं उस

रिपोर्ट की एक कापी लेकर आया हूँ। उसको मैं माननीय मंत्री जी आपको दे सकता हूँ। इसलिए आप उसका आनसर सदन में दें तो कोई ऐसी बात नहीं होगी जो गैर-वाजिब हो।

श्री जसवंत सिंह: मुझे स्थायी समिति की रपट की कापी की आवश्यकता नहीं है। माननीय सदस्य मुझ पर बहुत उपकार कर रहे हैं यह कह कर कि वह कापी दे सकते हैं। परन्तु यह जो ... (व्यवधान...)

श्री सुरेश पचौरी: आप उत्तर दे दीजिए।

श्री जसवंत सिंह: जी, मैं प्रयत्न कर रहा हूँ। अगर आप बीच में न बोलें तो उत्तर दे पाऊंगा। सभापति जी, जहां तक रहा सवाल कि क्या उस प्रोजेक्ट पर स्थायी समिति को अधिकार है या नहीं, निश्चित रूप से उसे अधिकार है। जहां तक स्थायी समिति की टिप्पणियां हैं, वे टिप्पणियां अपनी जगह पर हैं। यदि माननीय सदस्य चाहते हैं कि स्थायी समिति की रिपोर्ट पर सदन में बहस होनी चाहिए तो वह निश्चित रूप से हो सकती है। यह मूल प्रश्न अपने आप में डिस्ट्रिक्टिव सबमरीन से जुड़ा हुआ था जिसके बारे में मैंने उल्लेख किया है और जवाब दिया है। उसमें आपके प्रश्न का पहला भाग था कि सन् 2012 और 2030 तक जो रक्षा मंत्रालय डीआरडीओ, अफसर, साइंटिस्ट इत्यादि...। क्योंकि संभवतः वे अनेक वर्षों तक अपनी जगहों पर काम नहीं कर रहे होंगे तो एकाउन्टेबिलिटी कैसे होगी। यह तो मैं भी नहीं जानता कि सन् 2012 में मैं कहाँ हूँगा या माननीय सदस्य कहाँ होंगे। रक्षा मंत्रालय के प्रोजेक्ट्स विशेषकर डीआरडीओ सरकारी प्रोजेक्ट्स, जिनका अपने आप में इंडिजीनियस डेवलपमेंट का एक लांग जेस्टेशन पीरियड होता है, मुझे उदाहरण देने की आवश्यकता नहीं है, मसलन एलसीए या ऐसे प्रोजेक्ट्स अपने आप में बहुत समय लेते हैं। सरकार की जवाबदेही बनी रहती है चाहे किसी की भी सरकार हो।

माननीय सदस्य का जो दूसरा प्रश्न है कि सन् 1988 में कोई एक टिप्पणी हुई थी, एक प्रकार का आडिट मांगा गया था, उस पर आडिट नहीं किया गया था। मैं इसकी जानकारी प्राप्त करके माननीय सदस्य को अलग से लिखित रूप में दिलवा दूंगा।

SHRI P.N. SIVA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, India is now in a position to secure a seat in the Security Council of the UNO. Today, an enemy country or any country, through a satellite, by way of surveillance, can locate the movement of the military of any other country. The only thing that cannot be located is the movement of submarines. From this point of view, in future, the strength of the military of any nation is going to be determined by the strength of its submarines. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister—this is part (a) of

my question—the strength of our submarines now. Is it enough to meet our present requirements? Part (b) of my question is this. In answer to the main question, the hon. Minister has said that the first phase is scheduled for completion in 2012 and the second phase in 2030. In this fast-growing world, I think this is too long a period. We do not know what will happen in 12 years in this world. And the strength of our military is going to be determined by the strength of our fleet of submarines in these long years. What I would like to know is this. Even if an order is placed now, it will take six years to get a submarine from any foreign country. Before manufacturing indigenous submarines, is there any proposal to strengthen our fleet? As far as our knowledge goes, since our requirement is very less now, what steps are being taken? I would like to know this categorically. What is the strength we are having now? Is it enough for our present-day requirements? What steps are being taken by the Government to strengthen the fleet of submarines in our country?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, the hon. Member's question, again, has three components. There was a preamble to the question about satellite surveillance, etc. From that, I do get what the hon. Member means. As in other aspects of life, so in defence preparedness, perhaps, more pointedly and more particularly, technological advancement is very important. The Government is very mindful and we do address ourselves fully to that.

The hon. Member, thereafter, wanted to know the strength of the Indian submarine fleet. I can only share with him the information which is published in the international documents in this regard. I have no difficulty in informing the hon. Member that the *Jane's Defence Weekly* has announced that India has a fleet of 22 submarines. We believe in adequacy not only in numerical terms but also in technological terms. That is the aim towards which the Government is fully addressing itself.

The third aspect that the hon. Member referred to, I think quite appropriately, is that between now and the completion of the first phase of the indigenous programme, there is a time-lag of roughly a decade. In this time-lag, are we adequately prepared numerically and

technologically? Yes, Sir, we are. And the Government is fully addressing itself to all these aspects.

Scheme for Residents of Rural Areas for Benefits of I.T.

***582. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:@**

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan to formulate a scheme for rural areas to provide them benefits of Information Technology;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount to be spent on the scheme and the allocation for the purpose, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN):

(a) to (c): A Statement is laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha.

Statement

Regarding scheme for residents of Rural Areas for benefits of I.T.

(a) and (b) Ministry of Information Technology has been implementing pilot programmes and projects for the benefit of rural areas which can be replicated by the State Governments. Projects taken up in rural areas are at Statement-I.

(c) The estimated cost of Community Information Centre (CIC) project implementation is Rs. 220 crores for North-Eastern Regions. Out of which, Rs. 67.0 crores have been allocated for the current financial year i.e. 2001-2002. However, since the scheme is being implemented in composite manner, State-wise allocation of funds is not envisaged.

@The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Ambika Soni.